

THORGAL

The Sacrifice

ARTWORK

G. ROSINSKI - J. VAN HAMME

SCRIPT

Europe
COMICS

Rom

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EUROPE COMICS - ALL DIGITAL. ALL EUROPEAN.
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IT WAS THIS
SHODDEN RAIN, MY
LORD. THAT BUCK
SHOULD HAVE
BEEN YOURS.



YOU'LL GET IT NEXT
TIME, THOUGH.
I'M SURE YOU'RE
THE BEST HUNTER
IN THESE LANDS,
AND—



IF YOUR STUPID HORSE
HADN'T NEIGHED JUST AS
I WAS ABOUT TO SHOOT, THAT
BUCK WOULD HAVE BEEN
ON OUR TABLE TONIGHT,
ROASTED.



WHAT IS
THAT?

I ASK FOR YOUR HELP, LORD. PLEASE GIVE US SHELTER IN YOUR CASTLE FOR A FEW DAYS. MY HUSBAND IS DYING, OUR HORSES WERE STOLEN, AND WE HAVEN'T HAD ANY FOOD FOR—

ENOUGH!

MY CASTLE ISN'T A REFUGE FOR VAGRANTS SUCH AS YOU. BESIDES, YOU MUST BE CRAWLING WITH VERMIN AND DISEASE. GET OFF MY LANDS!

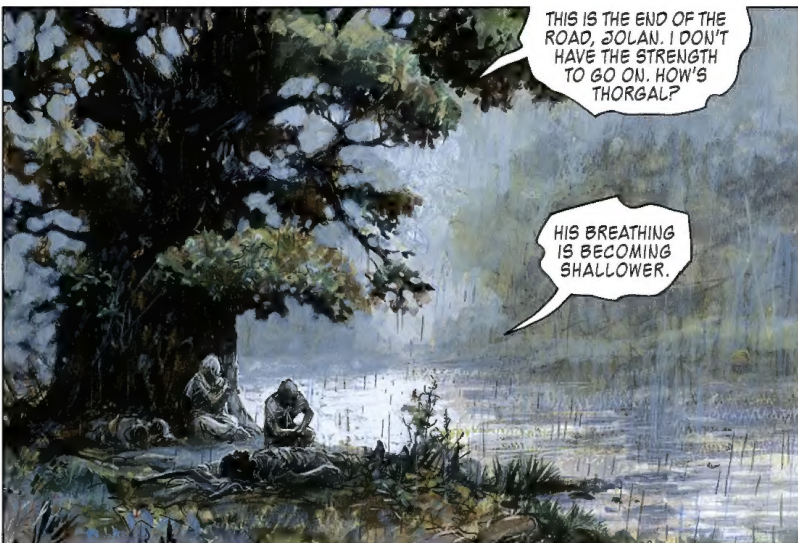
I BEG YOU, LORD, DON'T—

DON'T TOUCH ME, YOU BEGGAR!

GO AND DIE SOMEWHERE ELSE, OR I'LL HAVE YOU DROWNED IN MY MOAT.



I'LL BURN YOU ALIVE, WITCH! AND YOUR SPAWN WILL GO TO FEED MY DOGS! ...



THIS IS THE END OF THE ROAD, JOLAN. I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO GO ON. HOW'S THORGAL?

HIS BREATHING IS BECOMING SHALLOWER.



WOLFCUB AND ANIEL HAVE A FEVER. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, AARICIA?

IF ONLY YOU COULD HEAL THEM AS YOU HEALED THORGAL WHEN WE WERE IN THE JUNGLES OF THE LAND OF QA*.

*SEE VOLUME 5.

3



TLANATLOC HEALED HIM, THROUGH MY EYES. I'M STILL TOO YOUNG TO DO IT.

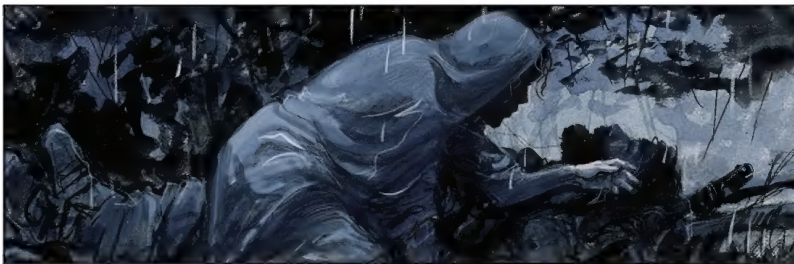
I CAN SEE THE THOUSANDS OF TINY STARS THAT MAKE UP ALL THINGS AND LIVING BEINGS, AND I HAVE THE POWER TO DISPEL THE FORCE THAT HOLDS THEM TOGETHER - BUT NOT TO REASSEMBLE THEM. I CAN SEE THE AFFLICTION THAT DEVOURS THORGAL, BUT I AM POWERLESS TO STOP IT.



YET I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO SAVE HIM. EVEN MY LIFE, IF NEEDED.



DON'T SAY THAT, JOLAN. I LOVE THORGAL DEEPLY, BUT YOU ARE MY SON. MY CHILD, BORN OF MY WOMB, PART OF MY FLESH. IF THORGAL WERE TO DIE, I WOULD NEED YOU MORE THAN EVER. COME. LET'S TRY TO GET SOME SLEEP.

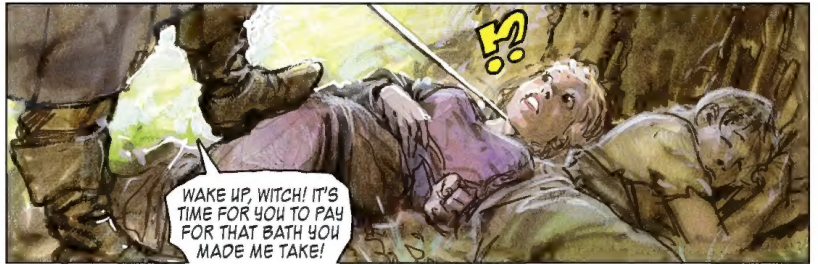


OH, FRIGG, MIGHTY GODDESS, NOBLE WIFE OF GREAT ODIN ... MEN HAVE FORSAKEN US, AND YOU ARE MY ONLY HOPE ...



THORGAL IS A GOOD AND HONEST MAN. YOU KNOW IT, FOR, SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE, YOU SAVED HIM. SAVE HIM AGAIN, ONE LAST TIME, AND WHATEVER THE PRICE I SHALL PAY IT ... BUT LET HIM LIVE. I BEG YOU - LET HIM LIVE! ...







AHH ... THERE'S NOWHERE LIKE MIDGARD* FOR A SPOT OF EXERCISE.

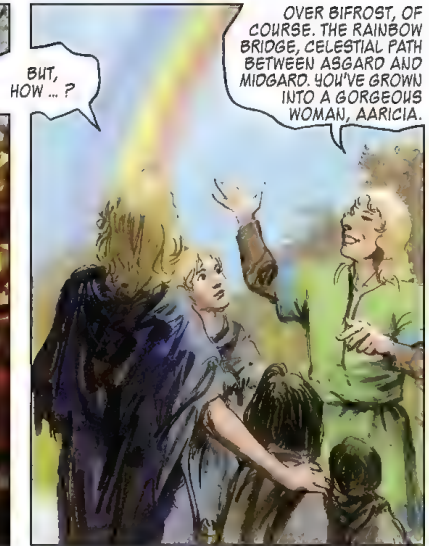


*THE WORLD OF MEN — AS OPPOSED TO ASGARD, HOME OF THE GODS



VIGRIOT?!
... IS ... IS THAT
YOU?!

IT IS. I HAVE BEEN INDEBTED
TO YOU FOR A LONG TIME,
AARICIA. IT WAS HIGH TIME
I CAME TO REPAY
THE DEBT.



BUT,
HOW ... ?

OVER BIFROST, OF
COURSE. THE RAINBOW
BRIDGE, CELESTIAL PATH
BETWEEN ASGARD AND
MIDGARD. YOU'VE GROWN
INTO A GORGEOUS
WOMAN, AARICIA.



OH, HUSH. I LOOK
TERRIBLE.
WE ...

I KNOW. FRIGG,
OUR GREAT GODDESS,
HEARD YOUR PRAYER
AND SENT ME TO
HELP.

ARE YOU REALLY A
GOD FROM ASGARD?
YOU DON'T LOOK IT.

I'M ONLY A VERY MINOR
GOD, WOLFCHUB, AN INSIG-
NIFICANT GOD WHOM
MORTALS DON'T KNOW
AND NEVER PRAY TO.



BUT YOU'RE
GOING TO HELP,
RIGHT? HEAL
THORGAL?



ALAS, JOLAN, I DO NOT HAVE THAT
POWER. OTHERWISE, I'D HAVE HEALED
MYSELF WHEN I BECAME BLIND WHILE
ON MIDGARD.* BACK THEN, AARICIA, WHO
WAS STILL A LITTLE GIRL AT THE TIME,
SAVED ME AND ALLOWED ME TO RETURN
TO ASGARD. AND I'VE NEVER
FORGOTTEN THAT.

*SEE VOL. 1.

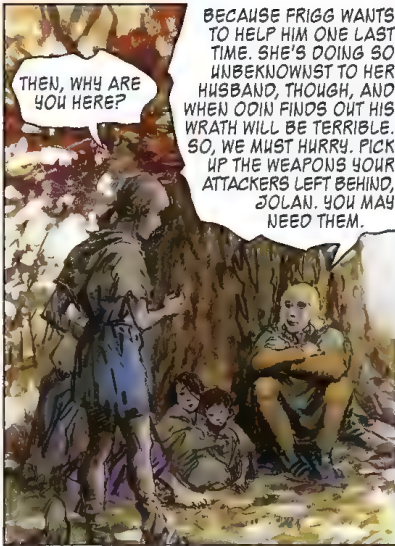


YOU KNOW, THORGAL IS WELL KNOWN
IN ASGARD. TOO WELL KNOWN, IN FACT,
BECAUSE SOME OF THE GODS ARE
BECOMING ANNOYED - INCLUDING
GREAT ODIN HIMSELF, THE ALLFATHER,
HUSBAND TO GENTLE FRIGG.

BUT, WHY? THORGAL
DIDN'T DO ANYTHING
WRONG!

HIS CRIME IS THAT HE COMES FROM ANOTHER WORLD.
HE STANDS OUTSIDE THE ESSENTIAL LINES TRACED
THROUGH ALL ETERNITY TO DIRECT THE FATES OF
MEN. THAT'S ALLOWED HIM TO COME BACK FROM THE
LAND OF THE DEAD THREE TIMES ALREADY AND TO
ACCOMPLISH FEATS AND DEEDS NO OTHER MORTAL
COULD HAVE. THAT IS SOMETHING ODIN WON'T
ACCEPT ANY MORE.





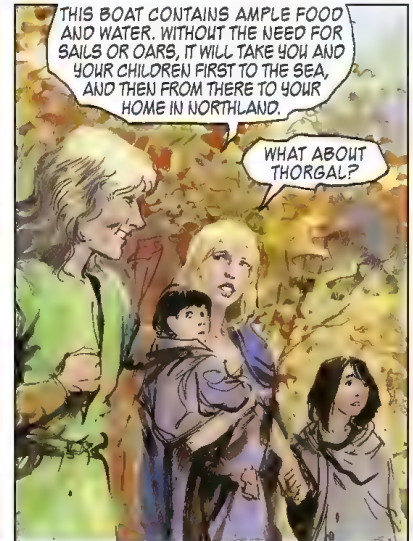
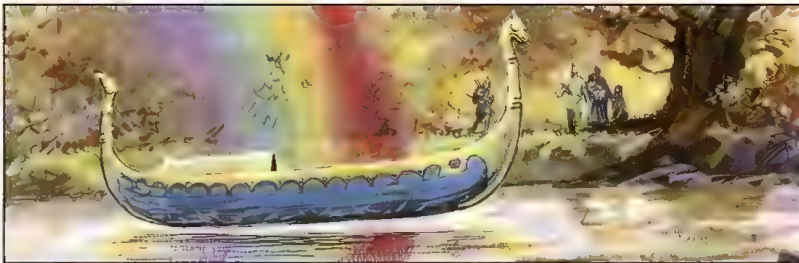
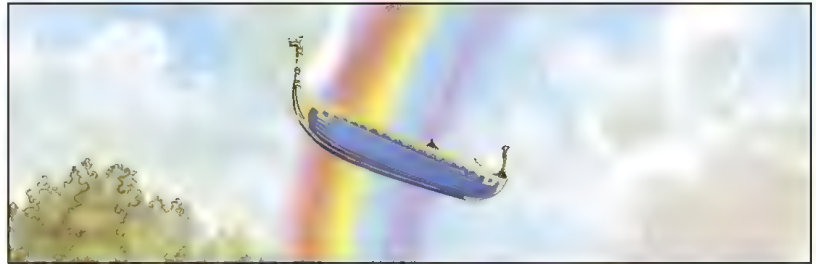
THEN, WHY ARE YOU HERE?

BECAUSE FRIGG WANTS TO HELP HIM ONE LAST TIME. SHE'S DOING SO UNBEKNOWNST TO HER HUSBAND, THOUGH, AND WHEN ODIN FINDS OUT HIS WRATH WILL BE TERRIBLE. SO, WE MUST HURRY. PICK UP THE WEAPONS YOUR ATTACKERS LEFT BEHIND, JOLAN. YOU MAY NEED THEM.



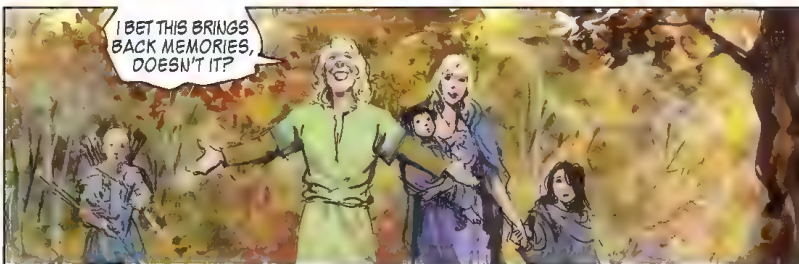
WHERE DO YOU MEAN TO TAKE US? WE CAN BARELY STAND, LET ALONE WALK.

I NEVER SAID WALK! LOOK ...



THIS BOAT CONTAINS AMPLE FOOD AND WATER. WITHOUT THE NEED FOR SAILS OR OARS, IT WILL TAKE YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN FIRST TO THE SEA, AND THEN FROM THERE TO YOUR HOME IN NORTHLAND.

WHAT ABOUT THORGAL?



I BET THIS BRINGS BACK MEMORIES, DOESN'T IT?



RECOGNISE THESE?

MY PEARLS! ... THE TEARS OF TĀHŪ! ...

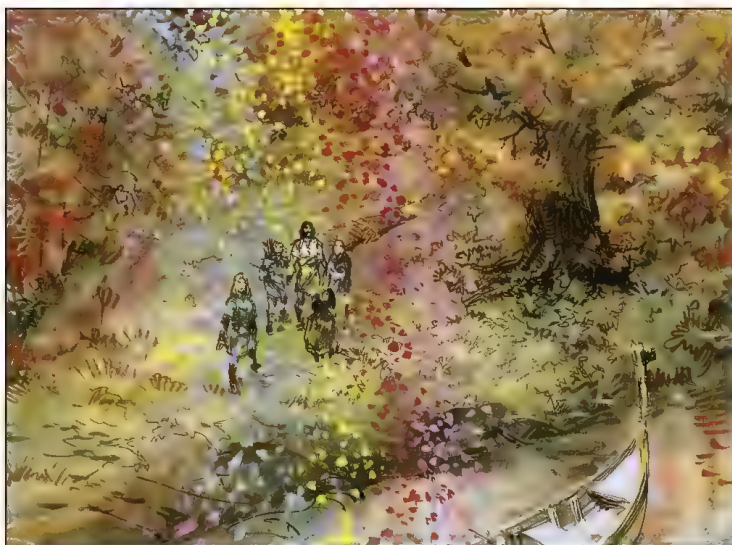
I FISHED THEM OUT OF THE MORNING LAKE, WHERE YOU THREW THEM SO I COULD RETURN TO ASGARD.



FRIGG IMBUED THEM WITH THE POWER TO RESTORE THORGAL'S STRENGTH, BUT ONLY FOR TWO DAYS.



THORGAL?! ...



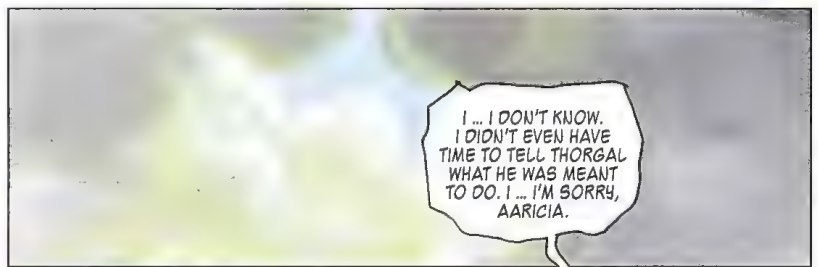


ODIN'S WRATH ...

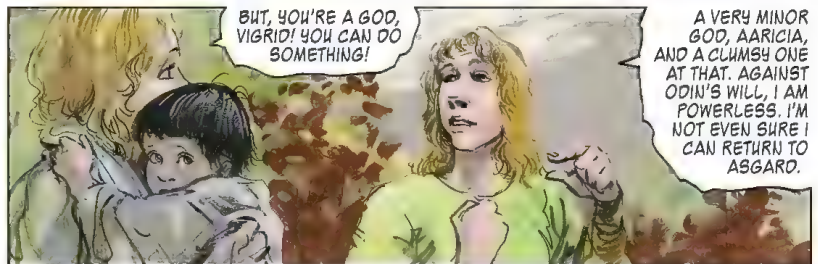


THE ALLFATHER FOUND OUT ... THEY'RE DOOMED!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, DOOMED!? WHERE ARE THEY, VIGRID? WHERE ARE THEY?!



I ... I DON'T KNOW. I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO TELL THORGAL WHAT HE WAS MEANT TO DO. I ... I'M SORRY, AARICIA.



BUT, YOU'RE A GOD, VIGRID! YOU CAN DO SOMETHING!

A VERY MINOR GOD, AARICIA, AND A CLUMSY ONE AT THAT. AGAINST ODIN'S WILL, I AM POWERLESS. I'M NOT EVEN SURE I CAN RETURN TO ASGARD.



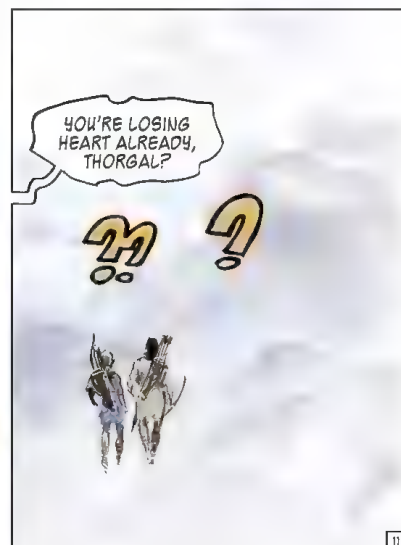
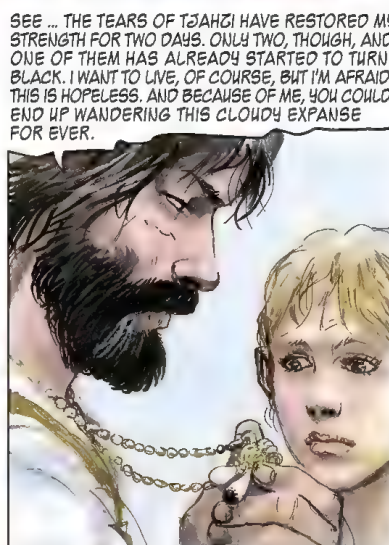
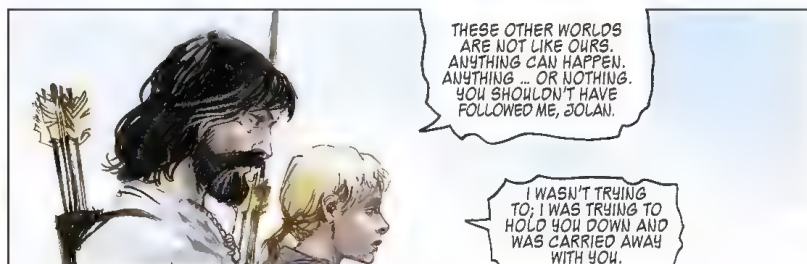
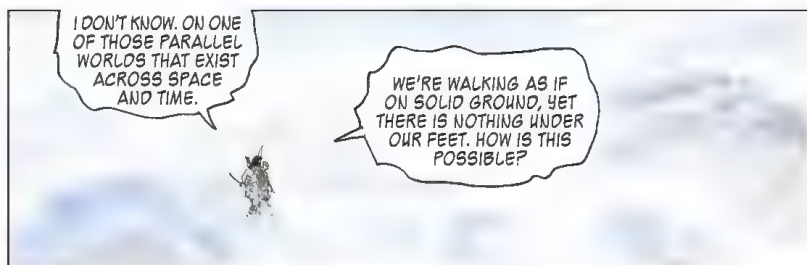
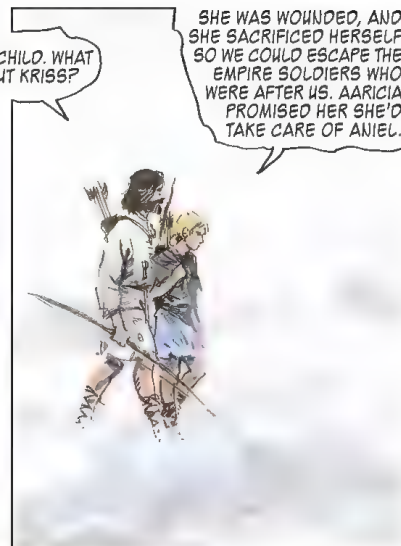
THORGAL, MY BE-LOVED ... HE ONLY JUST RETURNED TO ME ... AND JOLAN ... WHY JOLAN?!

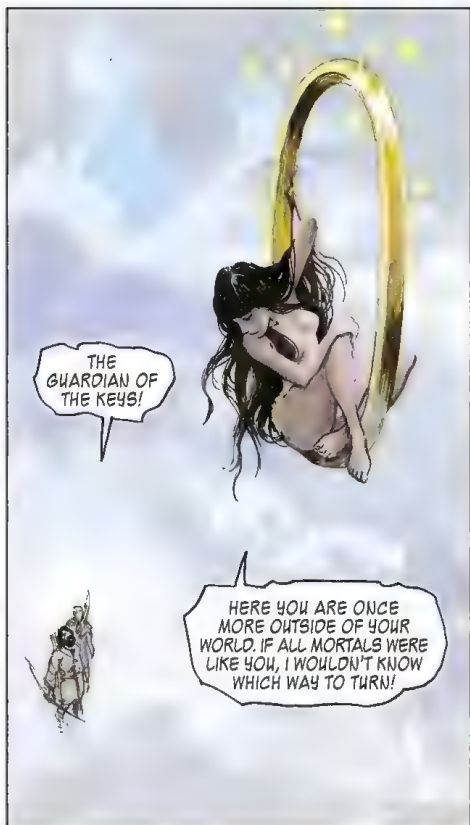
COME. ALL I CAN DO NOW IS TAKE YOU AND THE CHILDREN BACK TO NORTHLAND. THE REST IS IN ODIN'S HANDS ... AND FRIGG'S.





*SEE VOLUME 20.





THE
GUARDIAN OF
THE KEYS!

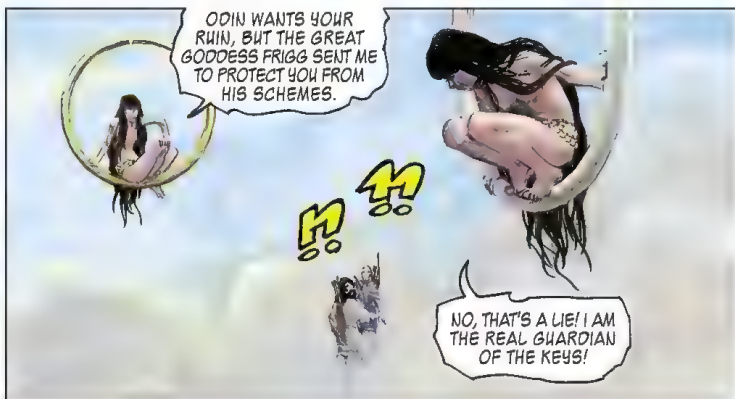
HERE YOU ARE ONCE
MORE OUTSIDE OF YOUR
WORLD. IF ALL MORTALS WERE
LIKE YOU, I WOULDN'T KNOW
WHICH WAY TO TURN!

SINCE YOU'RE HERE,
THOUGH, I SUPPOSE I CAN
HELP YOU ONE LAST TIME.
AFTER ALL, I AM IN
DEBT TO YOU.*

*SEE VOLUME 9.



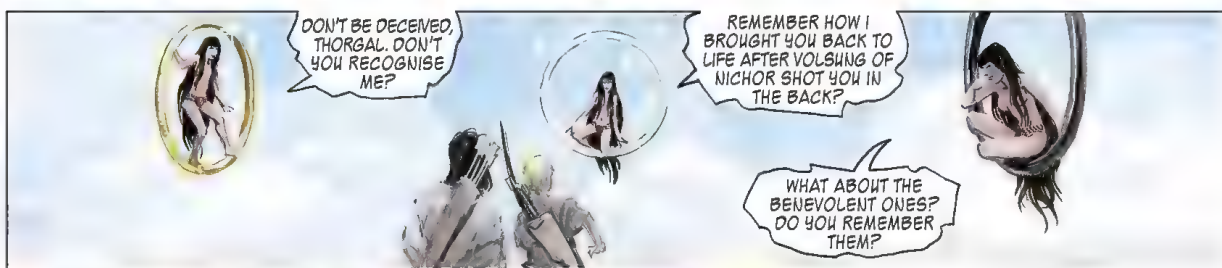
DON'T LISTEN TO
HER. IT'S A TRAP.



ODIN WANTS YOUR
RUIN, BUT THE GREAT
GODDESS FRIGG SENT ME
TO PROTECT YOU FROM
HIS SCHEMES.

!!

NO, THAT'S A LIE! I AM
THE REAL GUARDIAN
OF THE KEYS!



DON'T BE DECEIVED,
THORGAL. DON'T
YOU RECOGNISE
ME?

REMEMBER HOW I
BROUGHT YOU BACK TO
LIFE AFTER VOLUNG OF
NICHOR SHOT YOU IN
THE BACK?

WHAT ABOUT THE
BENEVOLENT ONES?
DO YOU REMEMBER
THEM?

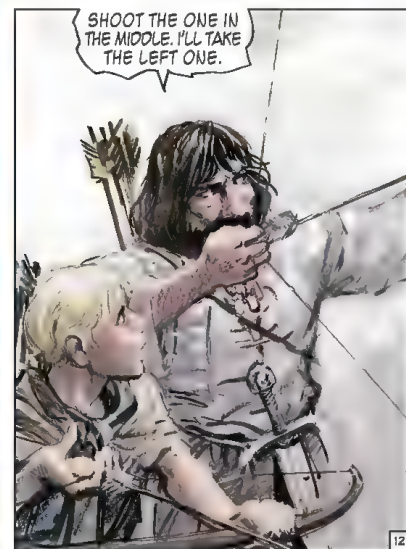


HOW TO TELL
WHICH IS THE
REAL ONE?

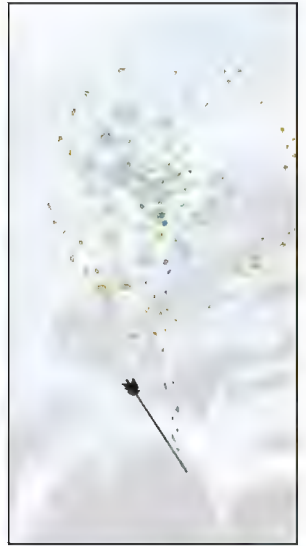
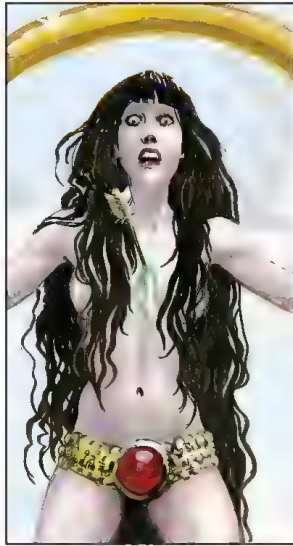
THERE'S A
VERY SIMPLE
WAY. TAKE YOUR
BOW AND DO
AS I DO.

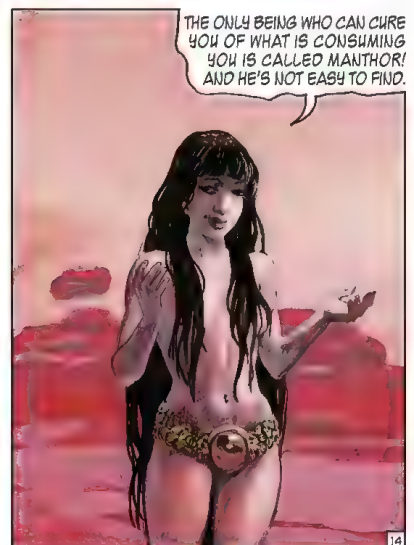
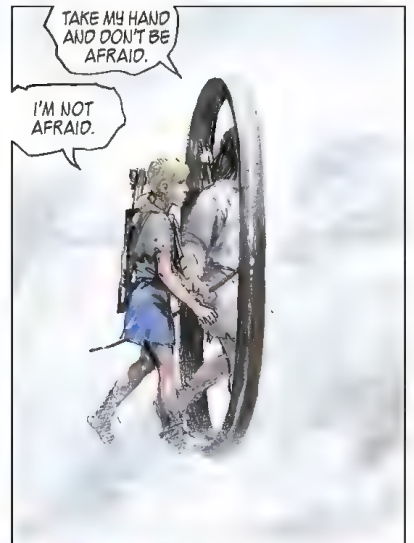
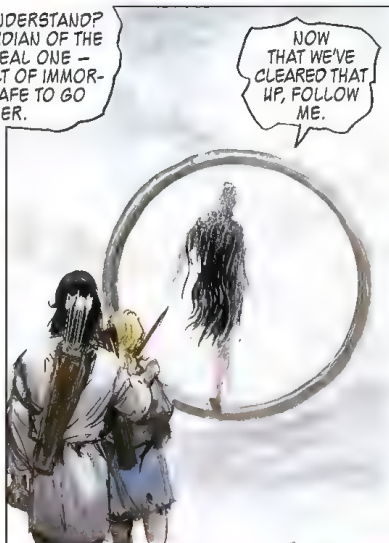
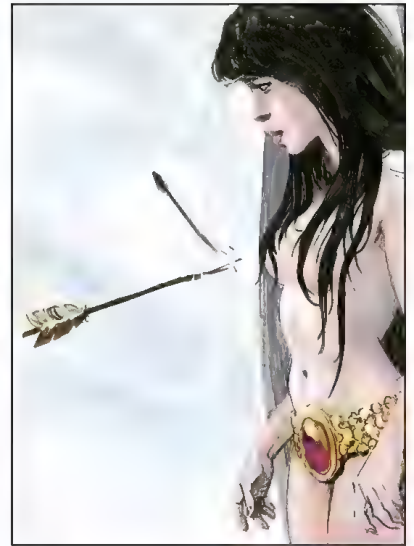
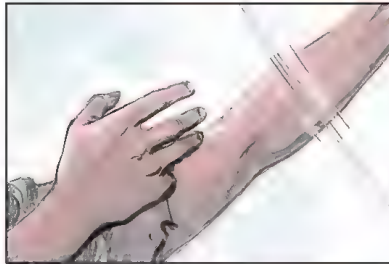


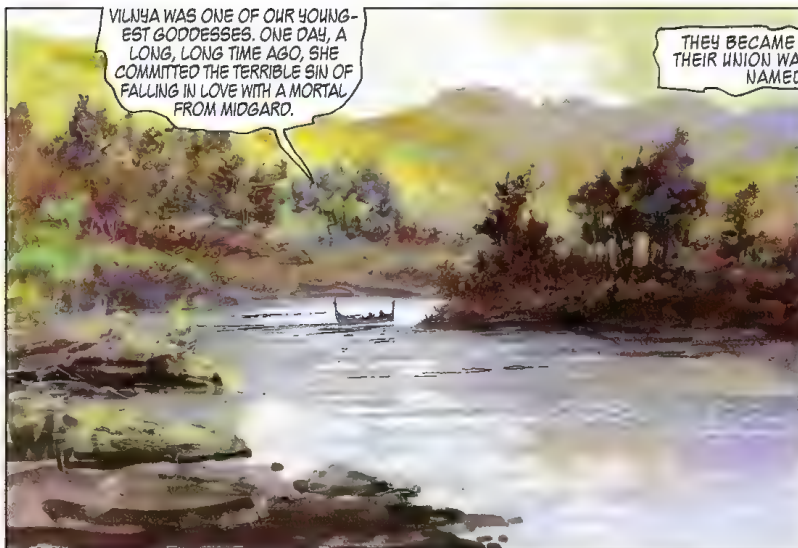
THORGAL, WHAT DO YOU
MEAN TO DO? ARE YOU
MAD? I'M THE GUARDIAN
OF THE KEYS, YOUR
FRIEND ...



SHOOT THE ONE IN
THE MIDDLE. I'LL TAKE
THE LEFT ONE.



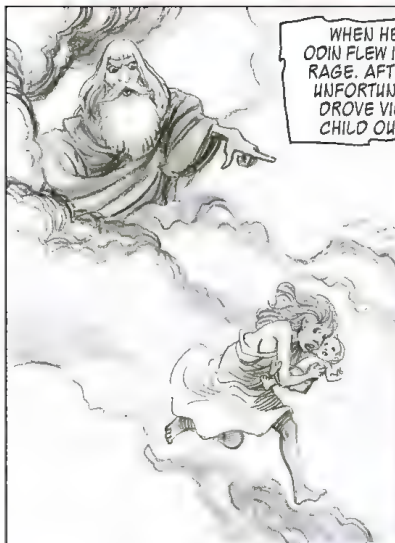




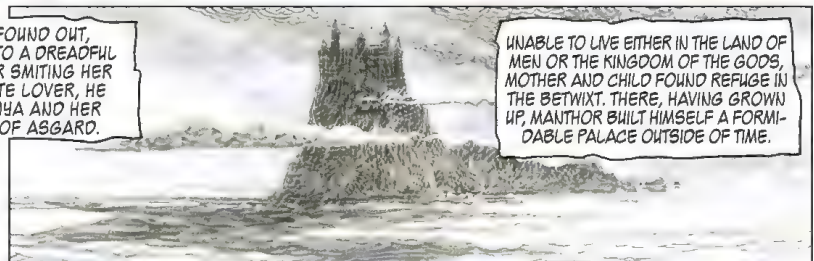
VILNYA WAS ONE OF OUR YOUNGEST GODDESSES. ONE DAY, A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, SHE COMMITTED THE TERRIBLE SIN OF FALLING IN LOVE WITH A MORTAL FROM MIDGARD.



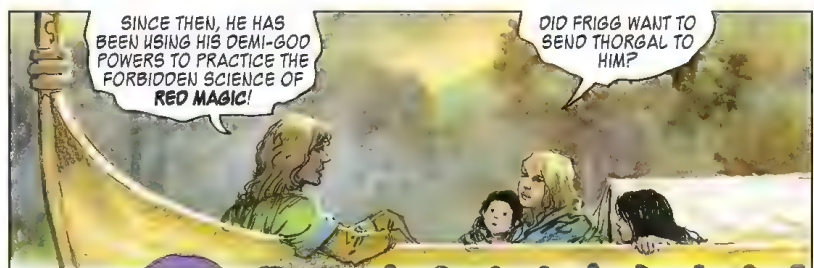
THEY BECAME LOVERS AND FROM THEIR UNION WAS BORN A SON THEY NAMED MANTHOR.



WHEN HE FOUND OUT, ODIN FLEW INTO A DREADFUL RAGE. AFTER SMITING HER UNFORTUNATE LOVER, HE DROVE VILNYA AND HER CHILD OUT OF ASGARD.

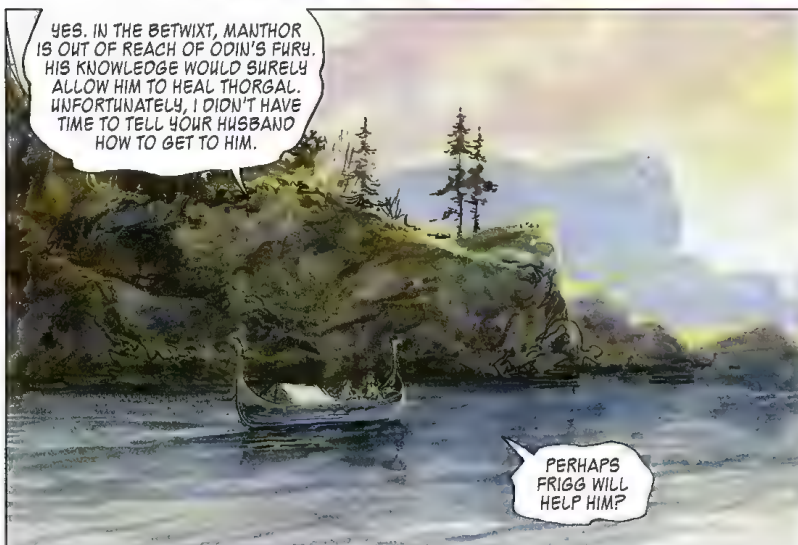


UNABLE TO LIVE EITHER IN THE LAND OF MEN OR THE KINGDOM OF THE GODS, MOTHER AND CHILD FOUND REFUGE IN THE BETWIXT. THERE, HAVING GROWN UP, MANTHOR BUILT HIMSELF A FORMIDABLE PALACE OUTSIDE OF TIME.



SINCE THEN, HE HAS BEEN USING HIS DEMI-GOD POWERS TO PRACTICE THE FORBIDDEN SCIENCE OF **RED MAGIC!**

DID FRIGG WANT TO SEND THORGAL TO HIM?

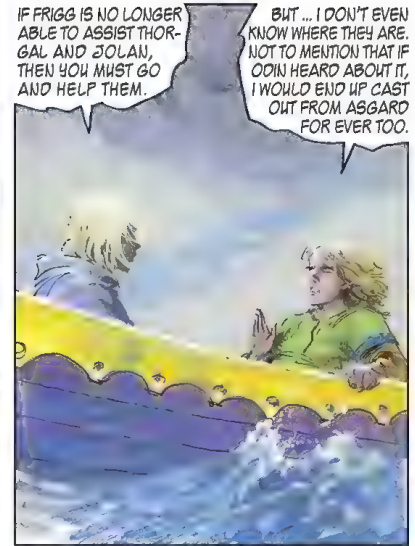
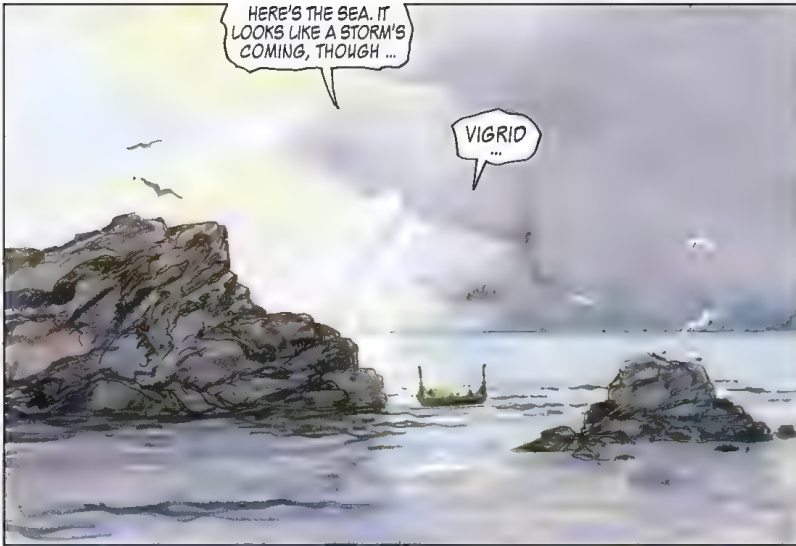


YES. IN THE BETWIXT, MANTHOR IS OUT OF REACH OF ODIN'S FURY. HIS KNOWLEDGE WOULD SURELY ALLOW HIM TO HEAL THORGAL. UNFORTUNATELY, I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO TELL YOUR HUSBAND HOW TO GET TO HIM.

PERHAPS FRIGG WILL HELP HIM?



I'M AFRAID NOT. NOW THAT ODIN HAS MADE HIS WILL KNOWN, FRIGG CAN NO LONGER OPENLY DEFEY HIM.



SOMETIMES, BREACHES WILL OPEN BETWEEN WORLDS, ONLY TO CLOSE IMMEDIATELY. THE WAY INTO THE BETWIXT IS THROUGH ONE OF THOSE BREACHES.

BY FOLLOWING THE GOLDEN WATER THAT FLOWS FROM THEM. THAT'S ALL I KNOW.

SUCH BREACHES ARE NOT COUNTED AMONG THE PORTALS I GUARD, AND THE LAW OF THE WORLDS FORBIDS ME FROM ENTERING THEM. YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND ONE ON YOUR OWN.

HOW CAN WE FIND THEM?

FRIGG GAVE YOU TWO DAYS TO RECLAIM YOUR LIFE, AND ODIN CANNOT RESCIND THAT GIFT. HOWEVER, HE'LL DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO PREVENT YOU FROM REACHING MANTHOR BEFORE THE DEADLINE, SO THAT HE CAN FINALLY RECEIVE YOU INTO VALHALLA, HIS PALACE OF 540 DOORS.

WHAT'S THE POINT, THEN? ALL THAT MY LIFE HAS BEEN GOOD FOR IS BRINGING WOE TO MY LOVED ONES. WHY DEFEY THE GODS TO PRESERVE IT?

I ASK ONLY ONE THING ... HELP JOLAN RETURN TO MIDGARD. THE CURSE THAT IS UPON ME HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM, AND HE DOESN'T BELONG HERE.

I WILL REMAIN HERE WITH YOU, AND YOU'RE GOING TO FIGHT, THORGAL! FOR YOUR LIFE, BUT ALSO FOR AARICIA, FOR WOLF-CUB, FOR YOUR LITTLE BOY ANIEL, AND ... AND FOR ME.

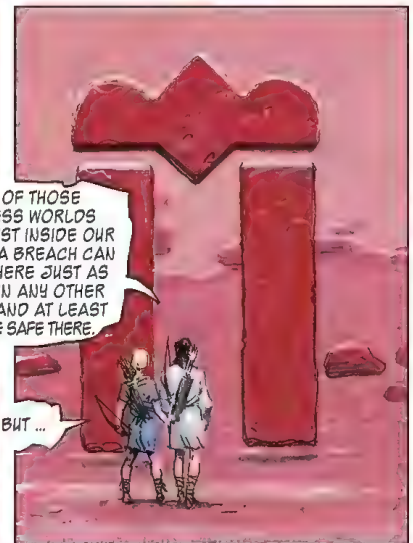
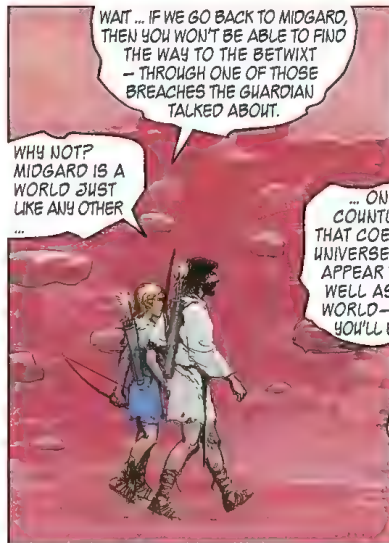
NO!

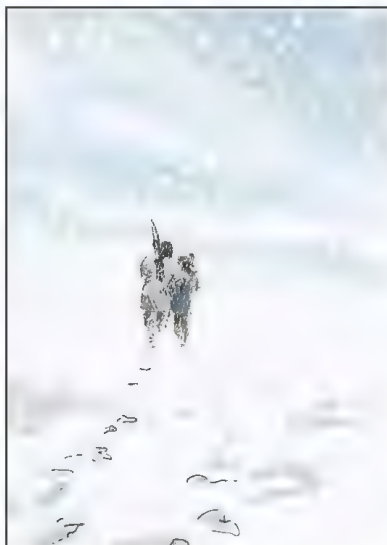
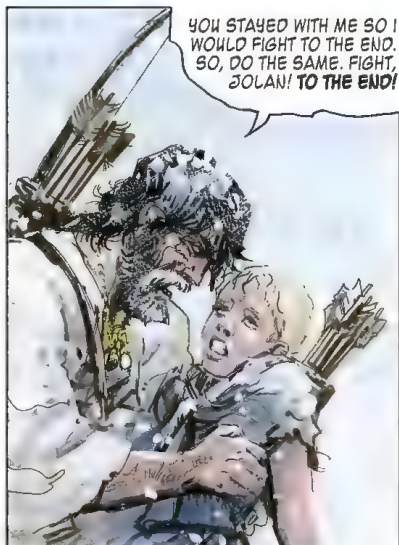
JOLAN WILL BE YOUR KEY. FAREWELL.

AARICIA HAS TOLD ME COUNTLESS TIMES HOW, NO MATTER THE HARDSHIPS AND THE DANGERS, YOU NEVER GIVE UP, HOW NO OBSTACLE EVER SCARES YOU, AND HOW YOU FIGHT TO THE END.

YOUR SON IS WORTHY OF YOU, THORGAL. HE'S RIGHT, TOO: FIGHT FOR THE LAST TIME, I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK.

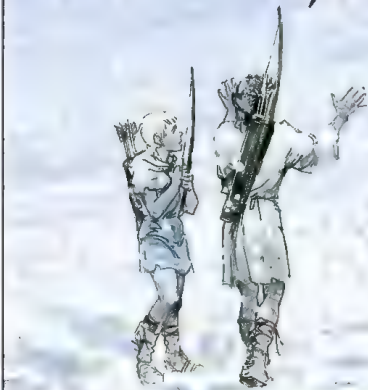
FINE. STILL, I'LL NEED A KEY TO GET OUT OF HERE.





WHAT ...
WHAT IS
IT?

I DON'T KNOW. SOME
SORT OF INVISIBLE
BARRIER. LET'S TRY
TO GO AROUND IT.



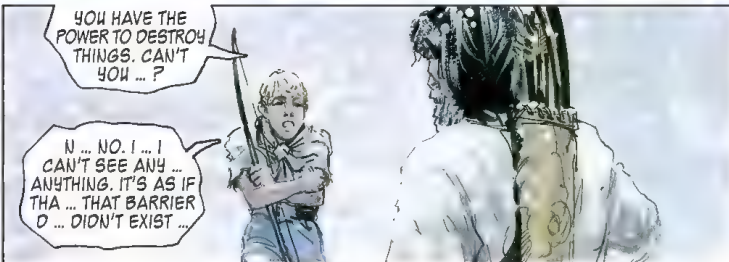
WELL?

N ... NOTHING.
THIS WALL D ...
DOESN'T END.



YOU HAVE THE
POWER TO DESTROY
THINGS. CAN'T
YOU ... ?

N ... NO. I ... I
CAN'T SEE ANY ...
ANYTHING. IT'S AS IF
THA ... THAT BARRIER
D ... DIDN'T EXIST ...



AND I ... I'M TOO
C ... COLD. I'M T ...
TOO T ... TIRED ...
T ... TIRED ...

JOLAN!



DON'T FALL ASLEEP, JOLAN! IF
YOU FALL ASLEEP IN THIS COLD,
YOU'LL DIE! JOLAN! JOLAN!

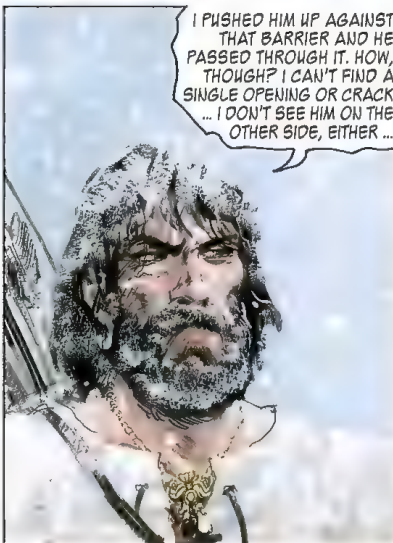


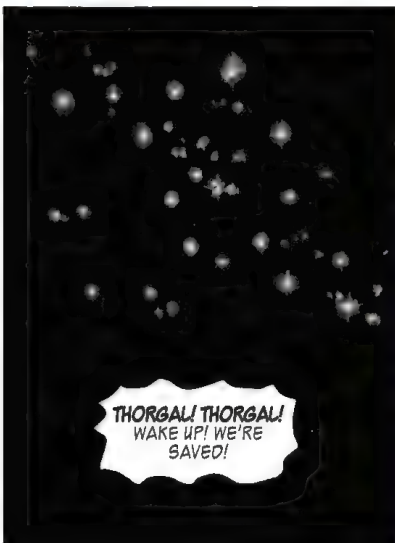
JOLAN, DO YOU HEAR
ME? WAKE UP! JOLAN!!
JOL-

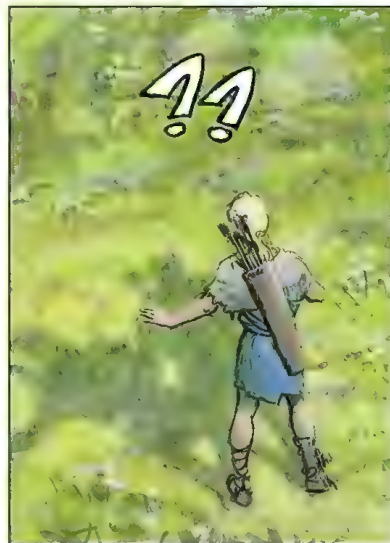


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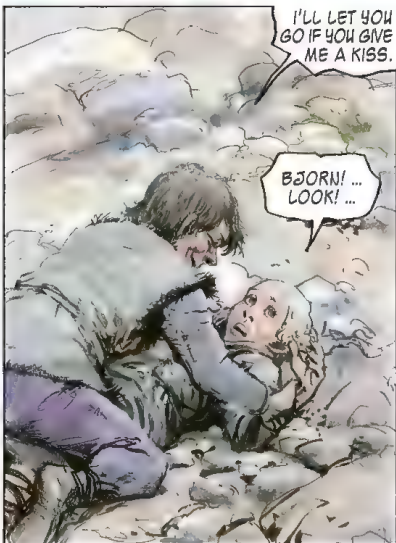
DON'T EVEN TRY
TO ESCAPE, HELGI.
I RUN FASTER
THAN YOU!

HEE! HEE! HEE!



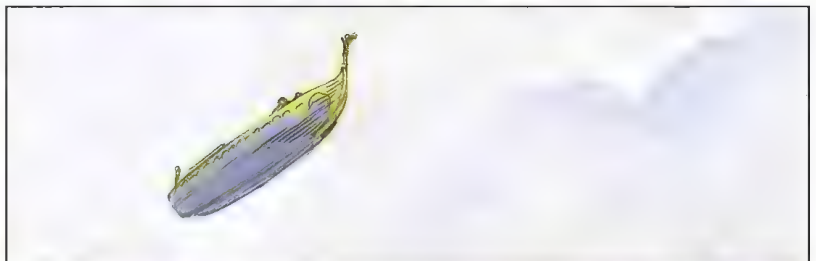
YOU'RE MY
PRISONER
NOW!

STOP IT!
NOT IN THE
MUD! IT'S
NOT FAIR!



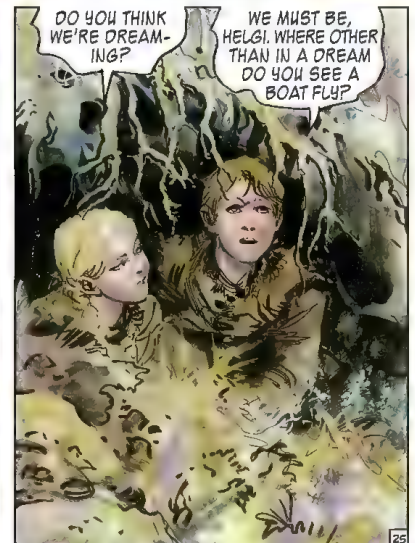
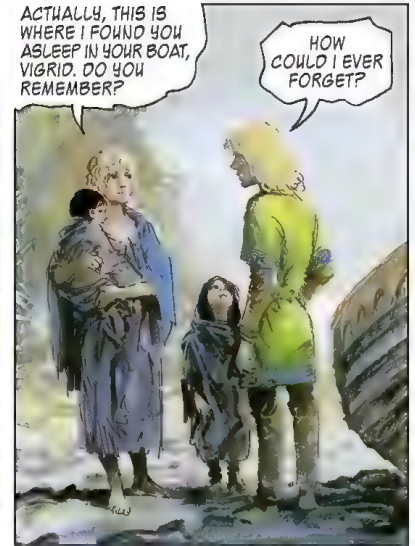
I'LL LET YOU
GO IF YOU GIVE
ME A KISS.

BJORN! ...
LOOK! ...



BJORN, I'M
SCARED ... ARE
THEY DEMONS?

I ... I DON'T KNOW.
BE QUIET. THEY MUSTN'T
HEAR US.



HAVE YOU NOTICED?

WHAT?

WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR HOURS AND THOSE TWO SUNS ARE STILL IN THE SAME SPOTS.

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE MUST BE IN A WORLD WHERE THERE IS NO NIGHT.

NO ANIMALS, EITHER. I'VE YET TO SEE A SINGLE ONE - EVEN A BIRD.

AND NO WATER. I'M PARCHED.

SO AM I. STARVING, TOO. I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHEN I LAST ATE.

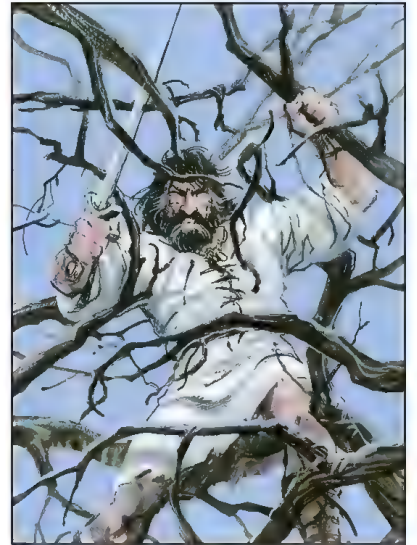
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, THORGAL?

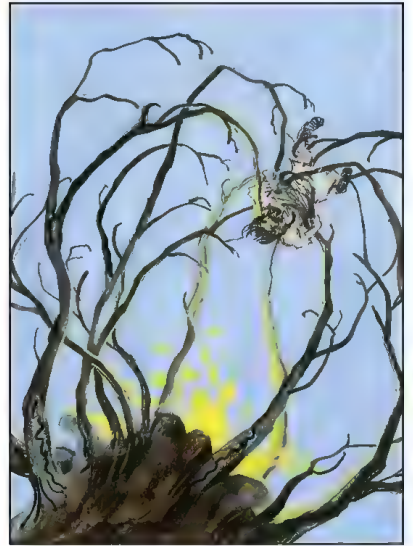
WE DON'T HAVE A CHOICE - WE MUST KEEP GOING. WE MUST FIND THAT GOLDEN WATER THE GUARDIAN OF THE KEYS TOLD US ABOUT. BUT WE HAVE VERY LITTLE TIME LEFT.

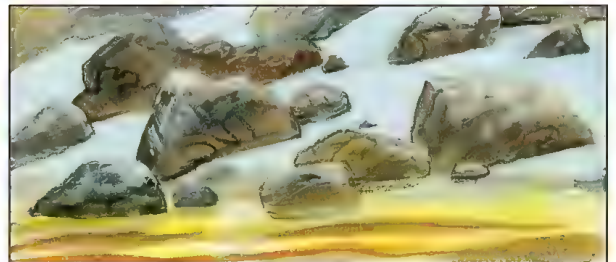
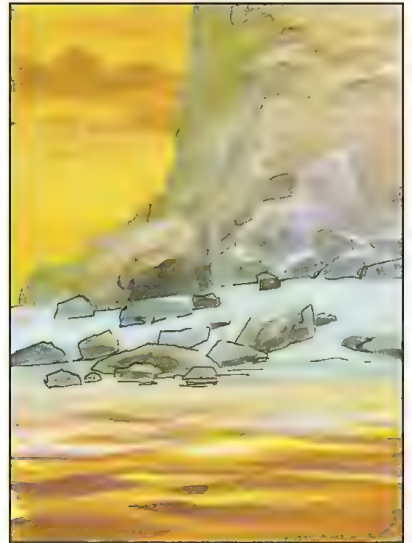
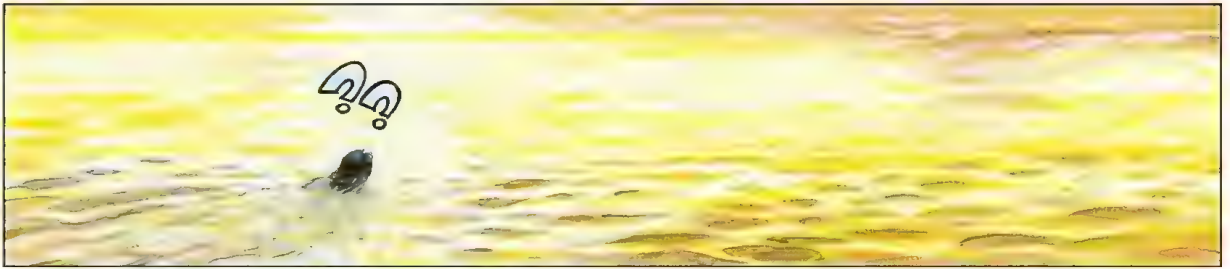
SEE ... THE FIRST PEARL HAS TURNED BLACK ALREADY, AND THE OTHER HAS STARTED TO. I CAN FEEL MY STRENGTH DESERTING ME LITTLE BY LITTLE, JOLAN. SOON, IT WILL BE GONE ...

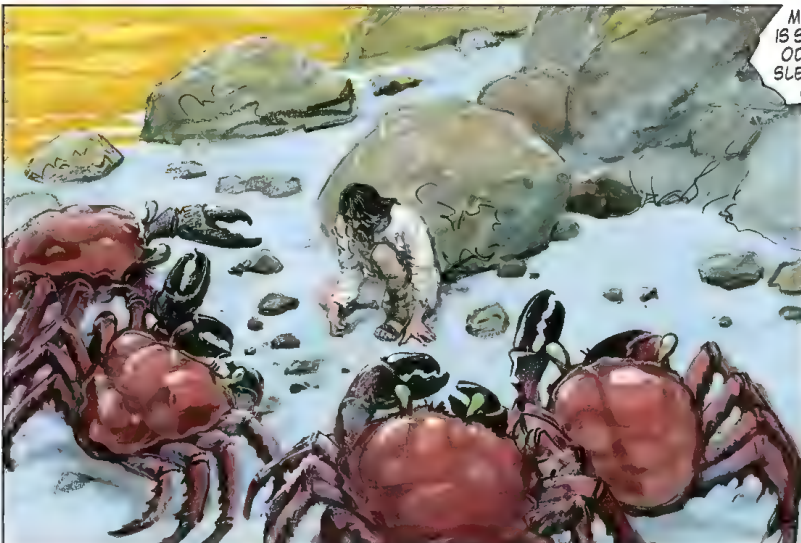
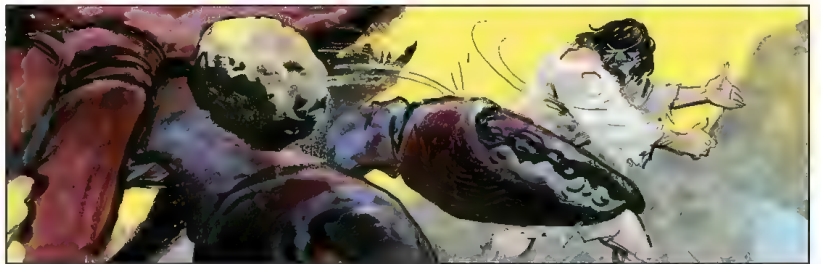
??

THORGAL?! ...



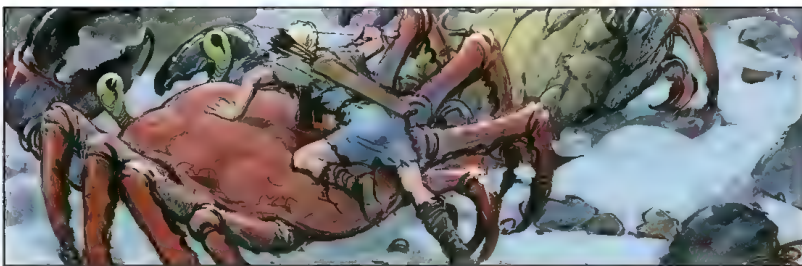






MY ... MY STRENGTH
IS SPENT ... YOU'VE WON,
ODIN! TONIGHT I WILL
SLEEP IN YOUR PALACE
OF 540 DOORS.







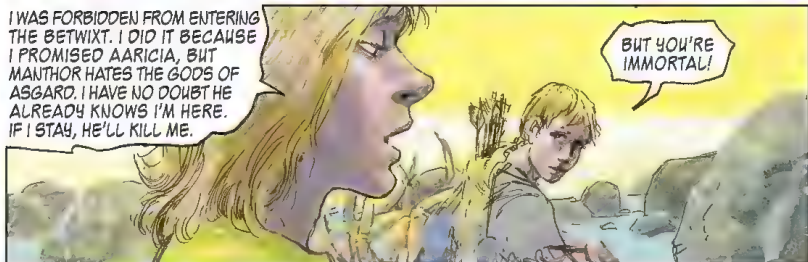
THORGAL ... WE'RE ON MANTHOR'S ISLAND, IN THE BETWIXT. HIS CASTLE ISN'T FAR.

JOLAN ... I ... CAN'T ...



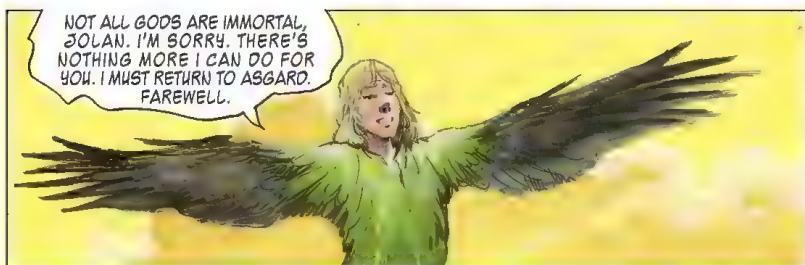
VIGRID, LOOK. THE SECOND PEARL IS ALMOST COMPLETELY BLACK. HELP ME CARRY MY FATHER TO THE CASTLE.

I ... I CAN'T ...



I WAS FORBIDDEN FROM ENTERING THE BETWIXT. I DID IT BECAUSE I PROMISED AARICIA, BUT MANTHOR HATES THE GODS OF ASGARD. I HAVE NO DOUBT HE ALREADY KNOWS I'M HERE. IF I STAY, HE'LL KILL ME.

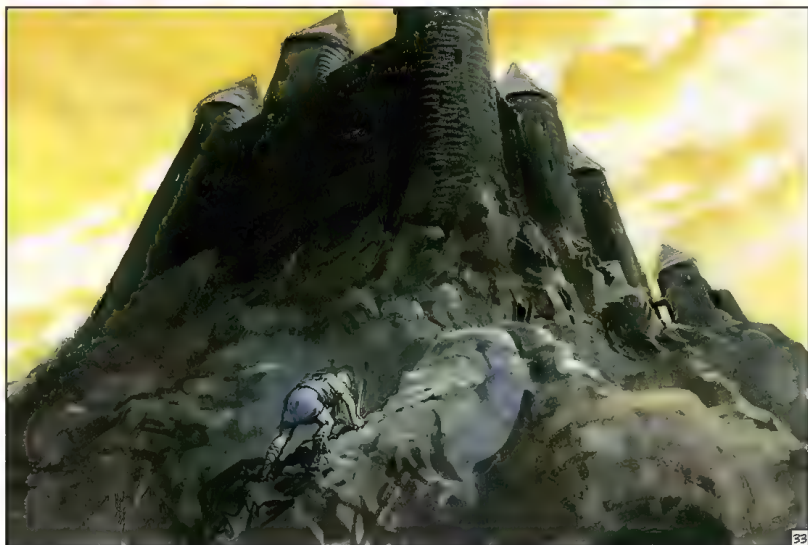
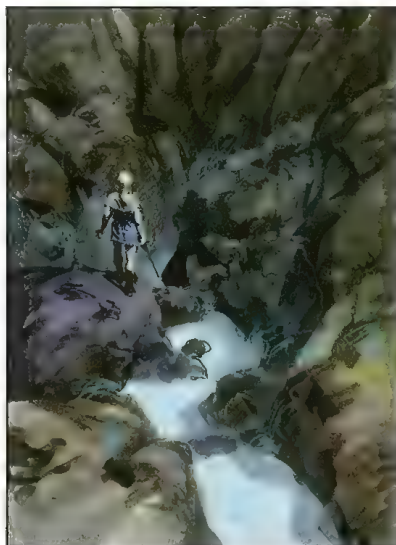
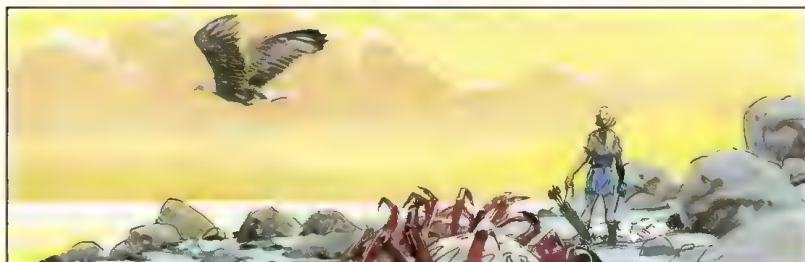
BUT YOU'RE IMMORTAL!

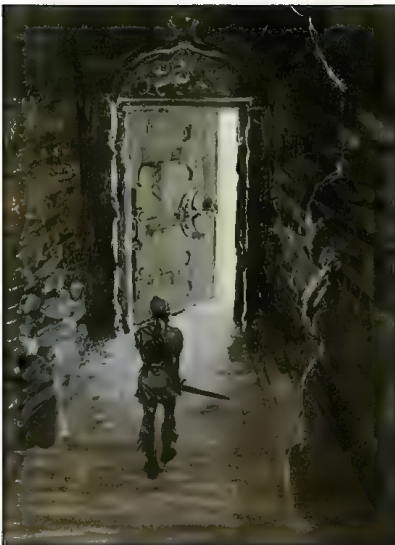
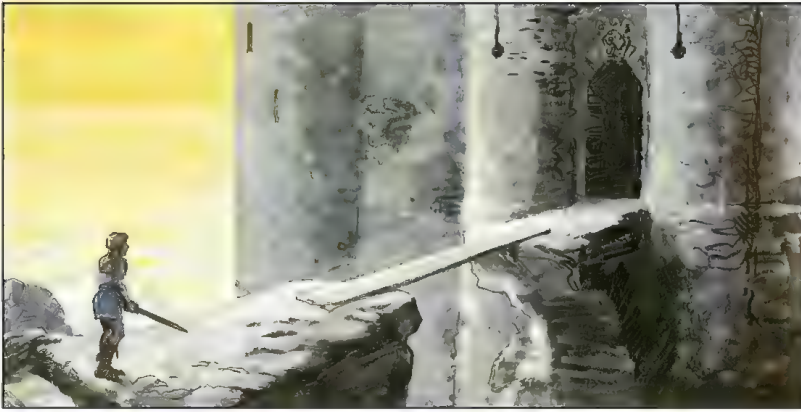


NOT ALL GODS ARE IMMORTAL, JOLAN. I'M SORRY. THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN DO FOR YOU. I MUST RETURN TO ASGARD. FAREWELL.



HOLD FAST, THORGAL! YOU AND I WILL FIGHT TO THE END. AS YOU'VE ALWAYS DONE, AND AS YOU'VE TAUGHT ME TO DO. I LOVE YOU.







ARE ... ARE YOU
MANTHOR?

YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR SWORD
NOW. YOU'RE IN NO DANGER
HERE. YES, I AM MANTHOR,
AND YOU ARE SOLAN, SON
OF THE CHILD OF THE
STARS.



MY FATHER, THORGAL,
IS DYING. OUR FRIEND,
THE GUARDIAN OF
THE KEYS, TOLD US
YOU COULD SAVE
HIM.

I CAN, INDEED.
WHAT WILL YOU GIVE
ME IN EXCHANGE,
SOLAN?



I ... I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

I KNOW WHO THORGAL IS,
AS WELL AS WHERE HE
CAME FROM. IT WAS I WHO
SENT THE TREE THAT
BROUGHT HIM HERE.



SO, LET ME ASK YOU AGAIN:
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO
GIVE ME SO THAT I'LL HEAL
YOUR FATHER?

WHAT COULD I
POSSIBLY GIVE
YOU? I OWN NOTHING
BUT MY LIFE.



YOUR LIFE WILL DO. A LIFE
FOR A LIFE IS AN HONEST
BARGAIN. ARE YOU READY
TO GIVE ME YOURS TO
SAVE THORGAL'S?



WELL?

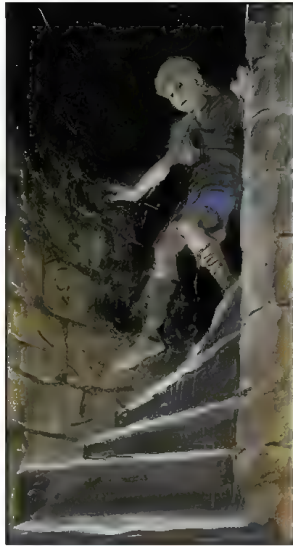


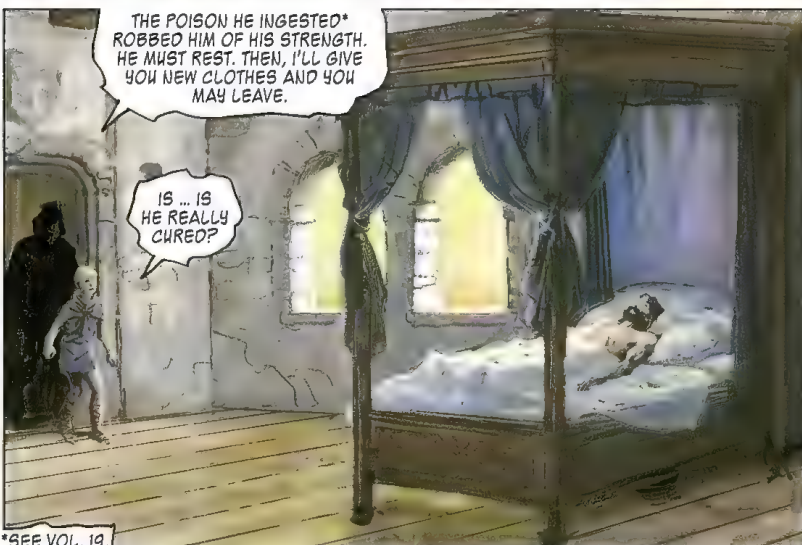
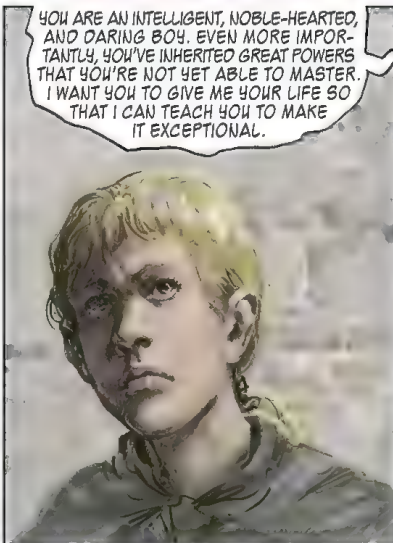
IF SUCH IS THE
PRICE TO PAY FOR
THORGAL TO LIVE,
THEN I SHALL PAY
IT. HURRY, THOUGH
— I BEG YOU,
HE'S DYING.

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T
DISAPPOINT ME, SOLAN.
MY SERVANTS HAVE AL-
READY GONE TO FETCH
YOUR FATHER FROM
WHERE YOU LEFT HIM.



I'LL HAVE FOOD
BROUGHT TO YOU
WHILE I TAKE CARE
OF HIM. DON'T
LEAVE THIS
ROOM.





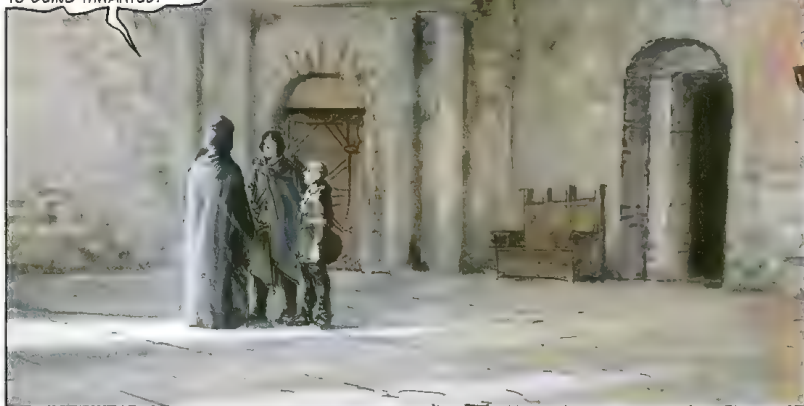
*SEE VOL. 19.

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IT'S HIGH TIME FOR YOU TO RETURN TO MIDGARD. ODIN MUST HAVE REALISED BY NOW THAT THORGAL ESCAPED HIS WRATH, AND I KNOW FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THAT HE DOESN'T TAKE KINDLY TO BEING THWARTED.

I HAVE BUT ONE PIECE OF ADVICE FOR YOU, THORGAL. GO HOME. GO HOME TO YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN, AND DON'T DO ANYTHING TO ATTRACT THE GODS' ATTENTION. PERHAPS YOU MAY FIND PEACE AT LAST.

LIVING IN PEACE WAS ALWAYS MY ONLY AMBITION, MANTHOR. HOW CAN I EVER THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU'VE DONE?



THE PRICE HAS BEEN PAID ALREADY. I TOLD YOUR SON HE IS SMART AND BRAVE. LET'S SEE IF HE CAN ALSO BE CLEVER.

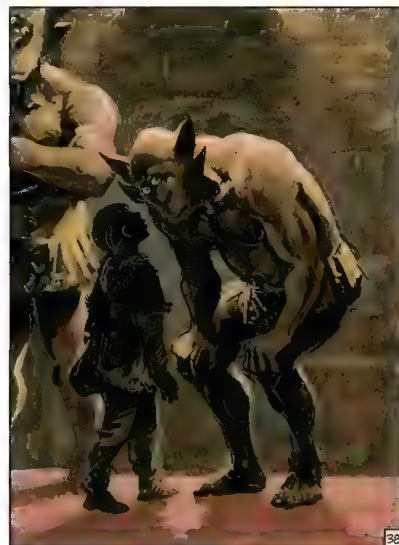
THESE ARE MY SERVANTS KARSH AND HSRAK. I CREATED THEM A FEW CENTURIES AGO, WITH ENOUGH EYES AND EARS FOR THEM TO SEE AND HEAR EVERYTHING.

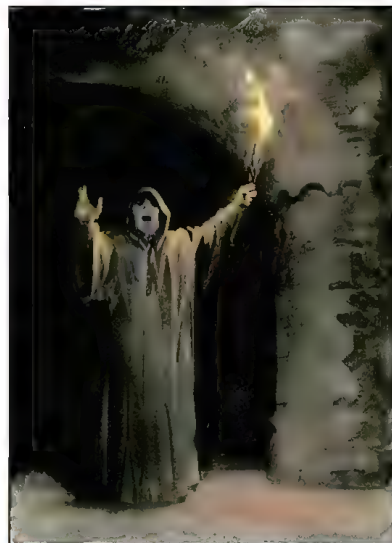
ONE OF THESE DOORS WILL TAKE YOU TO MIDGARD, THE OTHER CAST YOU INTO THE VOID. I'VE ORDERED ONE OF MY SERVANTS TO LIE TO YOU AND THE OTHER TO TELL YOU ONLY THE TRUTH.



YOU CAN ASK BUT ONE QUESTION OF WHICHEVER ONE OF THEM YOU CHOOSE, ZOLAN. UNDER SUCH CONDITIONS, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU CAN FIND OUT WHICH DOOR IS THE RIGHT ONE?

SOUNDS FAIRLY EASY TO ME.





THAT SCHEMING
WENCH AARICIA USED
WITCHCRAFT. IT'S
OBVIOUS.



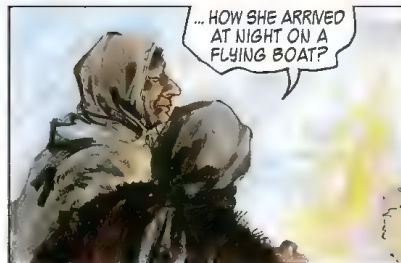
WHEN SHE WAS BANISHED*
FROM OUR CLAN, SHE WAS
BRANDED ON THE CHEEK.
YET, TODAY HER SKIN IS AS
SMOOTH AS A YOUNG
GIRL'S.



YOU'RE RIGHT. AND WHAT
ABOUT THAT STORY YOUNG
BJORN TOLD? ...

*SEE VOLUME 12.

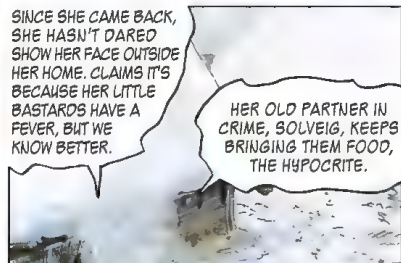
... HOW SHE ARRIVED
AT NIGHT ON A
FLYING BOAT?



SHE'S STRUCK A
BARGAIN WITH DEMONS
FROM THE UNDERWORLD
SHE HAS.



SINCE SHE CAME BACK,
SHE HASN'T DARED
SHOW HER FACE OUTSIDE
HER HOME. CLAIMS IT'S
BECAUSE HER LITTLE
BASTARDS HAVE A
FEVER, BUT WE
KNOW BETTER.



HER OLD PARTNER IN
CRIME, SOLVEIG, KEEPS
BRINGING THEM FOOD,
THE HYPOCRITE.

DIDN'T SHE MANAGE TO
CONVINCE GUNNAR, OUR
CHIEFTAIN, TO GIVE HER
BACK HER HOUSE?



AS WELL AS FORCE US TO RETURN
HER JEWELLERY AND FURNITURE
WE'D RIGHTFULLY CLAIMED WHEN
SHE WAS EXILED. SHE'S CLEARLY
PUT A SPELL ON HIM.



I'M SURE
SHE'S PREPARING
CURSES TO
TAKE REVENGE
ON US.

WE SHOULD RUN HER OUT OF
THE VILLAGE LIKE LAST TIME,
BEFORE SHE BRINGS TRAGE-
DY DOWN UPON US ALL.



GUNNAR WON'T ALLOW
IT, ALAS. HE SAYS WE
NEED TO WAIT FOR HER
HUSBAND TO RETURN
BEFORE THE THING* CAN
MAKE A DECISION.

HER HUSBAND? HAI HAI HAI! ...
SHE'LL BE WAITING A WHILE FOR
THAT ONE. AFTER WHAT HE DID TO
US, THAT BLACKGUARD THORBAL
WON'T BE SHOWING HIS FACE
IN NORTHLAND FOR A VERY
LONG TIME ...



TALKING ABOUT ME,
YOU OLD CRONES?



*GOVERNING AND JUDICIAL ASSEMBLY OF EACH
VIKING CLAN



THORGAL! ...
JOLAN! ...



THANK YOU, O GREAT
GODDESS FRIGG!
AND THANK YOU,
GENTLE VIGRID!



YOU'RE ALIVE!
IT'S WONDER-
FUL!



THANK JOLAN. IF
NOT FOR HIM ...

SORRY FOR INTER-
RUPTING SUCH A
TOUCHING REUNION ...



... BUT I'VE BEEN INFORMED OF YOUR
RETURN, AND I'VE CALLED FOR THE
THING TO CONVEENE TOMORROW. NOT
ALL MEMBERS OF OUR CLAN ARE
HAPPY TO SEE YOU BACK, THORGAL.



IT'S SHAIKAN THE
MERCILESS!

HE SMASHED
OUR DRAKKARS
AND SOLD OUR
WARRIORS AS
SLAVES!

HE KILLED
OUR SONS!

HE MUST BE HANGED
AND HIS FAMILY
EXILED AGAIN!

SILENCE!



SPEAK, THORGAL AEGIRSSON. WE WILL HEAR YOU.



WHEN MY SON JOLAN FREED YOU AND YOUR MEN FROM THE CELLS OF THAT BYZANTINE SLAVER*, HE TOLD YOU WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO ME.

*SEE VOLUME 12.



THEREFORE, YOU KNOW THAT AFTER LOSING MY MEMORY, I FOUND MYSELF IN THRALL TO A DIABOLICAL WOMAN, KRISS OF VALNOR.



SHE MADE ME THINK THAT SHE WAS MY WIFE AND THAT I WAS SHAIGAN THE MERCILESS, LEADER OF A GROUP OF BLOODTHIRSTY PIRATES*.

*SEE VOLUME 11.

I DIDN'T KNOW WHO I WAS, BUT DEEP INSIDE I FELT I COULDN'T REALLY BE THIS SHAIGAN. WHEN THE GODS FINALLY RETURNED MY NAME AND MY MEMORIES TO ME, I MANAGED TO ESCAPE, WITH ONLY ONE DESIRE IN MY HEART: TO BE REUNITED WITH MY FAMILY AND FIND A PLACE WHERE WE COULD LIVE IN PEACE AT LAST.



IT IS TRUE THAT I LED THEIR SHIPS TO EVERY SHORE ON THE GREY SEA. BUT I NEVER TOOK PART IN THE FIGHTING OR THE PILLAGING. NOT OUT OF COWARDICE, BUT BECAUSE THE CRUELTY OF THE SLAUGHTER SICKENED ME.



WHAT HAS BECOME OF THIS KRISS OF VALNOR?

SHE'S DEAD.



SHE MANAGED TO LEAVE YOU A LITTLE KEEPSAKE, THOUGH, DIDN'T SHE? THAT LITTLE MUTE BASTARD YOUR WIFE HAD THE GALL TO BRING HERE. HE, TOO, MUST PAY FOR THE DEATH OF OUR KIN.

NO!



ANIEL IS OUR CHILD! THORGAU'S SON - AND MINE!

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VIKINGS OF THE NORTH! I WILL NOT DENY THE SERIOUSNESS OF MY CRIMES, THOUGH THEY WERE PARTIALLY BEYOND MY CONTROL. THE REST OF MY LIFE WON'T BE LONG ENOUGH TO ATONE FOR THEM, AND THE ONLY WAY TO REDEEM MYSELF WILL BE, FROM HERE ON, TO DEVOTE MYSELF ENTIRELY TO THE WELL-BEING OF THIS COMMUNITY THAT TOOK ME IN SHORTLY AFTER MY BIRTH.



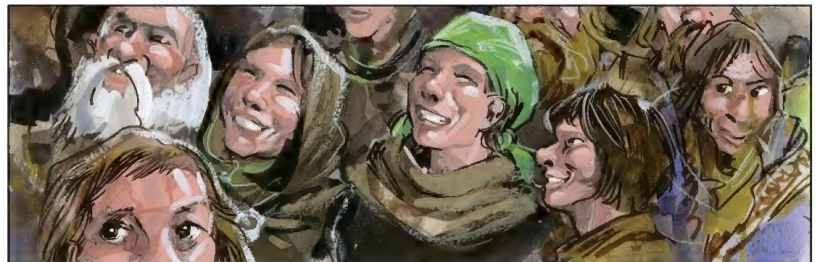
WE CAME BACK BECAUSE AARICIA WANTED TO BE AMONG HER PEOPLE AND BECAUSE WE WANTED TO SEE OUR CHILDREN GROW UP IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR TRADITIONS. IF YOU DO NOT WANT US HERE, THOUGH, WE WILL LEAVE ...



IN MY EYES, YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A LOYAL, HONEST MAN, THORGAL. WHEN YOUR SON WENT TO LOOK FOR YOU AFTER FREEING US, I PROMISED HIM YOU AND YOUR FAMILY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO US IN PEACE. I WILL KEEP THAT PROMISE.

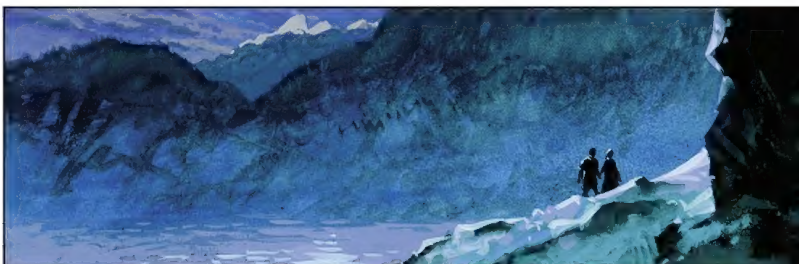


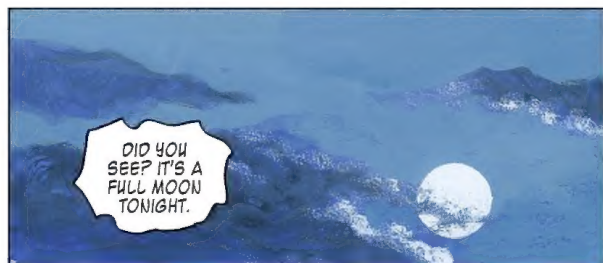
WELCOME BACK AMONG THE VIKINGS OF THE NORTH.

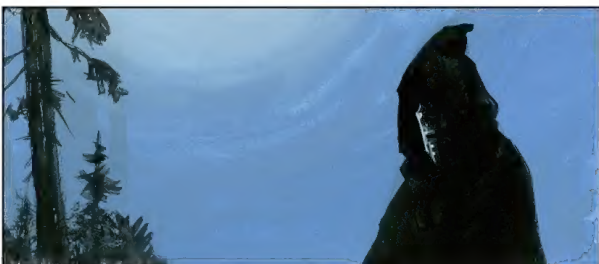
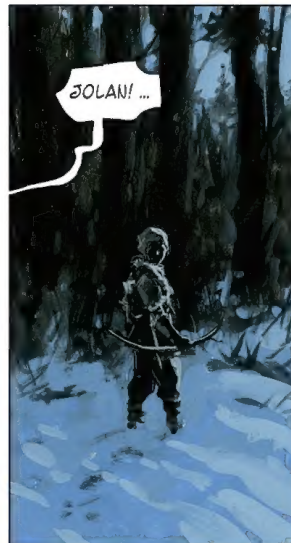
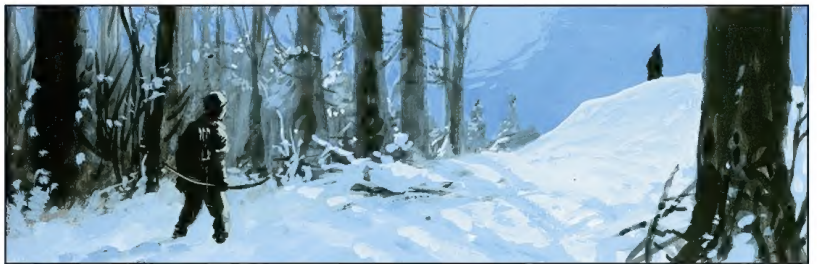
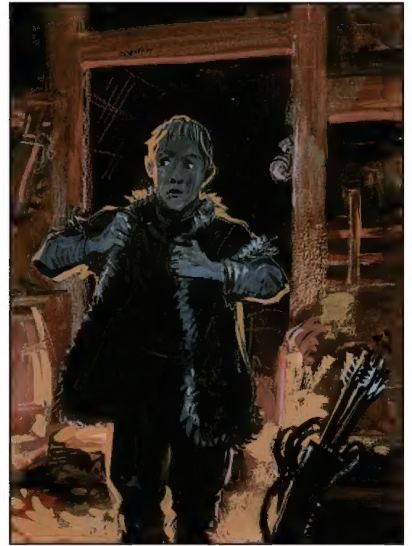
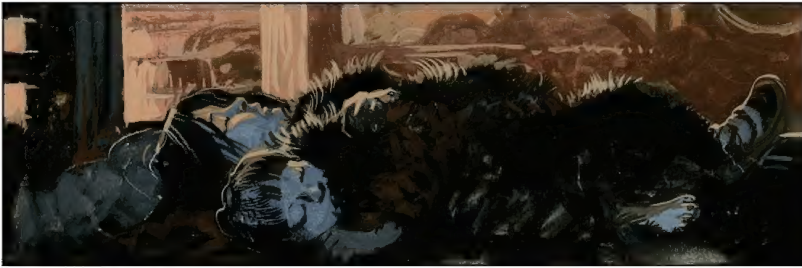


IT'S A WONDERFUL THING YOU DID FOR ANIEL ... AND ME.

HE'S YOUR SON, THORGAL, AND I PROMISED KRIS HE WOULD BE MINE AS WELL. SO SHALL IT BE, THEN. FOR HIM, FOR US, AND FOR EVERYONE ELSE.









YOU ...
YOU KNEW?

BEFORE HE LET US
GO, MANTHOR TOLD
ME THE SACRIFICE YOU
CONSENTED TO MAKE
TO SAVE ME. YOU'D
GIVEN YOUR WORD.
I HAD TO YIELD.



HE MADE
ME PROMISE
NOT TO TELL
ANYONE.

HE PROBABLY WANTED TO SHOW ME
WHAT YOU WERE WILLING TO DO OUT
OF LOVE FOR YOUR FAMILY.



YOU'RE THE LAST
DESCENDANT OF THE
PEOPLE OF THE STARS,
JOLAN, AND YOU'VE
INHERITED POWERS THAT
NO OTHER MAN ON THIS
WORLD HAS EVER HAD.
MANTHOR WILL BE A FAR
BETTER TEACHER THAN WE
ON HOW TO BEST USE AND
DEVELOP THEM. IT'S HARD
FOR ME TO ACCEPT IT, BUT
ONLY AT SUCH A COST
WILL YOU THRIVE.



DOES ... DOES
AARICIA
KNOW TOO?

NO. I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN IT TO HER. IT'S THE
LAW OF MEN TO SEE THEIR CHILDREN LEAVE
ONE DAY. YOU'RE DOING SO EARLIER THAN
EXPECTED, THAT'S ALL. SHE MIGHT BLAME
ME FOR LETTING YOU GO, BUT SHE'LL
UNDERSTAND.



BUT I'LL COME BACK!
WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER
AGAIN: YOU, AARICIA,
WOLFCUB ...

I HOPE SO, JOLAN.
I HOPE SO WITH ALL MY HEART.
BUT WE'RE NOT ALWAYS
THE MASTERS OF OUR FATE.
FAREWELL, MY SON. BE
HONOURABLE, BRAVE
... AND HAPPY.

